DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 123 541 CG 010 579

AUTHOR Marshall, Walter H.
TITLE [Media and Agencies on Aging: Technical Document].
PUB DATE Sep 75
NOTE 28p.; Paper presented at the Annual Governor's Conference on Aging (7th, Glendive, Montana, September 11-12, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Services; Guides; *Information Dissemination; Media Selection; *News Media; Older Adults; Program Development; Programing (Broadcast); *Publicize; Radio; *Senior Citizens; Television

ABSTRACT

This Technical Assistance Document offers assistance in contacting media representatives in your State or area on writing press releases or public service announcements, appearing on television shows, and conducting a public hearing on your annual plan. Although the material was prepared especially for State and area agencies on aging, it can be used by local directors of projects, programs, or information and referral services. It has always been a cardinal principle in the United States that the public has the right to know what its money is being spent for and how well it is being used. The citizen must be well-informed about the workings of his government if he is to effectively carry out his citizenship responsibilities. Furthermore, if the public is to benefit from the services you are helping to develop, people must know that they exist and how to reach them. When a new service is initiated you should mount a major public information campaign to inform people of its existence. There also needs to be periodical followup about the service. (Author/NG)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED123541

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Outline: Information Workshop
7th Annual Governor's Conference on Aging
Glendive, Montana 9/11/75 - 9/12/75
3:15 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Workshop #4
Walter H. Marshall

Today we will be all introduced to the field of Public Information, not only radio, television, and newspaper, but additional hints that will help you all in this field of aging.

First, we will talk about the relationships that you will have with the media.
Second, we will talk about the tools that will be used for good public information.
Third, we will then talk about preparing the story for distribution.
Fourth, the most important step, What is News?
Fifth, the Spot News Story.
Sixth, the Feature News Story and how to get it done.
Seventh, How to get stories in other publications, other than the newspapers.
Eighth, The Field of Radio and Television, and what it can do for you.
Ninth, When to use radio, and when to use television.
Tenth, How to find out what the station is programming and if this is what you want.
Eleventh, How to find out "Who's Who" in the media field.
Twelfth, The way to approach the station.
Thirteenth, How to write a Public Service Announcement.
Fourteenth, How to write a Community Bulletin Board Announcement.
Fifteenth, How to write a Radio Public Service Announcement.
Sixteenth, What is television news?
Seventeenth, Writing a News Release for television.
What is radio news?
Let's discuss regular radio scheduled programming.
Now let's prepare for an appearance.
Let's get acquainted on a few tips for a guest appearance on television.
Let's discuss the news conference.
How to hold a public hearing on the Annual Plans.
Now lets get together on what are PICTURES.
NOW IT'S UP TO YOU.
We will next ask if there are any questions.

Each of you will be given a workbook prior to the beginning of this workshop, so that you will be able to work right with the staff. There will also be extra copies of the workbook, and the outline of the workshop available after the Conference. We do hope that you will tell your friends.

This office in Helena, 449-3124, has a Speakers Bureau that is available on all phases of Aging, and will be more than happy at any time to talk to any organization or group.

This office also has a list of limited films that are on different phases of the Aging Program, and they are available at no charge by writing to Aging Services Bureau, P.O. Box 1723, Helena, Montana, Attention: Rich King or Walter Marshall.

Information-Referral Network

Montana is now completing a one-year Model Project on I & R, and we have 45 technicians in the field in almost all of the 56 Montana counties. As of this date we are in the process of having over 1500 Montanans using the service. The telephone number to use is toll free 1-800-332-2272, and it is available 24 hours a day. The

Helena State Office talks with the client, and also talks with the Agency that will handle the client's request. We do not offer a service, but make very sure that the Agency does. Effective October 1, 1975, the State of Montana will continue with the service on a limited basis for the next two years. The State Office on Aging is also about to start a new program on I & R with nursing homes. It will be an addition to the present I & R Program now in effect. The Citizen Advocate will accept all calls from any person at any nursing home on 1-800-332-2272, and they will be relayed to the State Office on Aging, where they will be processed and sent on to the proper agency. The difference between this new program and the regular I & R program is restricted to persons 55 years of age and older.

The State Office on Aging will conduct training for the new technicians later this month in Helena.

The main purpose of I & R is to get senior citizens in the habit of calling the telephone number in Helena so that we in Aging Services can contact the proper city, county, state or Federal office so they may help a client in need. You as members of a senior center, or just a concerned senior, have a personal duty to make very sure that each and every day that a friend or neighbor tells you something is wrong you have them call the number in Helena, 1-800-332-2272, and we at Aging Services will try to help them if at all possible. The only way we can make your life a little easier is to have you call us when you need help.

RELATIONSHIPS

The first step in developing a good public information program is to get to know personally those who report the news in your community. This includes people in the press and on radio and television.

Develop a list of such people, if one doesn't already exist, but don't just list the names of editors and radio-TV program directors.

If your area agency is a new one, you may want to visit the editor or the publisher of your local newspaper or the manager of the local TV or radio station to explain your program. When you do, take along a group of people from the community who are involved in programs for older people—providers of services and community leaders, older people, some of the members of your advisory council. They will illustrate perfectly the extent of your area agency's community involvement and this is important to all representatives of the media.

It is nice to know the publisher or managing editor of the local radio or television station. But the individuals who are most important to your efforts to build a good public information program are the working reporters and the cameramen whose job it is to cover your program.

Help them and you usually can count on good coverage when you have an event worth covering. And there is a huge difference between just coverage and good coverage.

Find out who these people are, and make a point of keeping them informed when things are going on.

Here are some things they'll expect you to do and to know:

1. Be available. Make sure the reporters who cover your organization know your business and home phone numbers, and give them the name and number of someone else to call when you aren't around.

2. Know the deadlines of newspapers and those of the radio or television news show.

3. Plan. Don't call your contact five minutes before deadline with a story you could have given him three days before.

4. Don't play favorites. There are two important points to remember here. First, if a newsman gets information from you that you had not already planned to release, he has an "exclusive" and you should never volunteer the same information to other newsmen. If others call you about the same subject, it's all right to provide the information. Second, when you are originating a story, make sure that each medium receives your news release, or your phone call, and at as close to the same time as you can manage. Under no circumstances should you favor one medium over another.

5. Don't complain about a story unless a serious error has been made, and then first call the reporter who handled the story. Don't go to his boss unless it's absolutely necessary.

6 Don't heckle newsmen by constantly asking them why a story you submitted wasn't used. It's all right to ask your contact if there was something wrong you can correct next time. But there are many good reasons why your story might have been thrown out at the last minute to make room for something the editor considered more newsworthy.

7. And always remember to say thank you. It pays big dividend to let members of the press know you appreciate their efforts. When someone does a particularly good job of reporting about your programs on one occasion or over the space of several months, a short, simple note of thanks will always be appreciated, and remembered. And if you're thanking a reporter, write to his editor, with a copy to him.

TOOLS

These are the things you will need in your office in order to respond to inquiries and to create effective publicity.

- This pamphlet can be one of the tools.
- Most media representatives will be able to supply you with guides to use in preparing copy for them.
- A date book is essential. List in it all your special events, your anniversaries, anything you think could be newsworthy. Then back up about three months and make a note that the date is coming up and that you should start making plans to tell about it.

A date book helps you to plan intelligently and to get the word to your news contacts soon enough to let them also make plans. In many cases it is wise to drop an informal note

INTRODUCTION

This Technical Assistance Document can help you contact media representatives in your State or area, write press releases or public service announcements, appear on television shows, and conduct a public hearing on your annual plan.

Although the material in this document was prepared especially for State and area agencies on aging, it can be used by local directors of projects, programs, or information and referral services.

Keep in mind that you are not "selling" the public something when you send out a news release and it is picked up by a newspaper or a script is accepted by a radio or TV station. All government agencies—Federal, State, area, city, or county—are obligated to inform the public of their activities and programs.

It has always been a cardinal principle in the United States that the public has the right to know what its money is being spent for and how well it is being used. The citizen must be well-informed about the workings of his government if he is to effectively carry out his citizenship responsibilities. Beyond the obvious right to know what his government does and why, he has a need to know.

Furthermore, if the public is to benefit from the services you are helping to develop, people must know that they exist and how to reach them. When a new service is initiated—information and referral, for example—you should mount a major public information campaign to inform people of its existence. But people forget and new people move into the area, so follow up periodically with stories about the service telling how it is helping people or interesting facts about the people it helps.

to your news contacts, or call to remind them of a significant event coming up. They'll usually tell you whether they want to cover it or whether they would like you to send them a story. A date book intelligently used will be of vast help both to you and the news media.

- You should also keep a scrap book of clippings of your publicity, and add notes about radio or television publicity. Be sure to mark clippings carefully with the date and name of paper. Looking back over such a scrap book will give you many ideas for future news stories.

- Remember, very few newspaper or broadcast stations will use handwritten copy.

- Above all you will need a basic fact sheet which summarizes all important data about your project on one or two pages. A simple fact sheet is reproduced on page 4, but you should organize yours to fit your particular project or organization.

Keep it constantly up to date. It will enable you to answer queries at any hour of the day or night with accuracy and confidence, and will help you prepare news of your activities. Perhaps you will want to prepare a fact sheet on each of several facets of your program. But be sure to have *one* fact sheet which covers the overall operation.

When you update your fact sheet, note date of revision on it, usually in the bottom left hand corner. Make sure everyone who has a copy of the old one gets a copy of the revision.

Reporters who cover your operation and their city or news editors should have copies of your fact sheets, with each revision. And always have your own updated one at hand to answer queries day or night.

State agencies should get copies of all fact sheets from all area agencies in their States, or prepare their own from data already on file in the State office.

PREPARING THE STORY

First, let's outline some rules you must observe to get your story even a glance in a newspaper, radio, or television news room.

1. Use standard sized (8½ x 11 or 8 x 10½) white paper, preferably without decoration. If your organization letterheads are simple and confined to the top of the page, this is acceptable. But don't use letterhead stationery that has a long list of officials running down the side of the paper. Always use normal weight paper.

2. Type your story, double-spaced on only one side of each sheet. Leave about one-third of the first page blank at the top for the editor's use. Leave at least an inch margin on both sides and at the bottom.

3. Don't send carbon copies to news media. Either reproduce the story on some kind of duplicating machine, or type an original for each recipient.

4. If you don't use letterheads, type the name of your agency and its address in the upper left hand corner of the first page. The date, the writer's name, and his business and home phone numbers go at the upper right hand corner.

5. Two or three spaces below the agency name and address, type "For Immediate Release" or instructions for a specified release date if the material must be held for a later date. If, for example, you are furnishing a summary of a speech before it is delivered, as you should do if at all possible, type "For Release Upon Delivery at 7 p.m., May 14, 1975." You do not have to worry about news media breaking release dates for which there is a good reason. They don't.

A note of caution about release times. Wire services—Associated Press, United Press International, and others—have as clients both the press and radio and television. General operating procedure is that news releases marked for release on a particular date are available for use by radio and television news stations as of 6:30 p.m. the evening before.

If, for example, your story is scheduled for release "for AMs Tuesday, June 23," radio and television may use it after 6:30 p.m. on Monday, June 22.

If it is important that your story not be used by anyone before a particular time, keep this in mind and be certain to put the specific time of release on your news story.

6. Try to hold your story to a single page. If you must run to a second page, end the first page with a complete sentence and paragraph then write the word "(more)" at the bottom of the page. On the second page, write your

Organization Fact Sheet

Oxford Area Agency on Aging

Address: 521 Main Street, Oxford, Your State 90009

Telephone: Oxford 0-0001

Purpose: To create a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for older people in the area designed to enable them to remain in their own homes or other places of residence.

Started: January 1, 1974

Older population of the area: 39,205 persons 60 years of age and older: 35,262 non-minority; 17 American Indian; 3,872 Negro; 18 Spanish language; and 36 Oriental.

Advisory council; Consists of 17 persons, including 3 from county government and 10 over the age of 60, 2 of whom are Negro and one American Indian.

Area plan: Public hearings held May 18, 1974; approved by the State Commission on Aging June 21, 1974. Includes provision of $124,189 in Federal funds under title III of the Older Americans Act from the State Commission on Aging, $35,000 from funds appropriated by the State legislature for programs for older people; and $24,365 in non-Federal matching funds from the Oxford County Commissioners. A total of $64,554 of this money is earmarked for activities of the agency in planning and administration, coordinating existing services, and pooling untapped resources; $98,000 is being used for services. The Family Service Society of America with a grant from the agency of $50,000 has expanded its information and referral service to provide special services for older people including outreach and escort. The Oxford Public Transit Authority, with a grant from the agency of $48,000, has initiated special dial-a-minibus service for older people in Oxford and East Oxford. The Oxford Area Homemakers, Inc., has received $20,000 to make possible an expansion of its staff and program so that homemaker services can be provided to more older people. The area agency also supervises a Nutrition Project for the Elderly and a Model Project funded by the State Commission.

Director: John J. Doakes (Office: OX 0-0001; Home: OX-0-0002)

Secretary: Miss Ellen Roe (Office: OX 0-0003; Home OX 0-0004)

Remarks: See clip Oxford News, Sept. 2, 1974--Initiation of East Oxford Transportation Program for Older People: Clip East Oxford News, Aug. 10, 1974--Help for the Elderly; clip Oxford News, June 24, 1974--Area Agency Plan Approved; clips Oxford News, May 19, 1974, May 18, 1974, May 17, 15, 1974--Hearing on Plan to Help Older Oxfordians.

Revised Oct. 25, 1974

name or that of your agency at the upper left and "2" at the upper right.

7. At the end of the story, write "-end -".

8. Don't try to write a headline. That's what copy editors are paid for and why you left room at the top of your first page.

9. See the sample story on page 6.

WHAT IS NEWS?

A definition of news acceptable to everyone never has been written and probably never will be. News is something which is at least slightly out of the ordinary run of events.

We have all heard the time-worn definition that it's news when a man bites a dog. The author of a booklet similar to this one advised prospective writers of "news" releases:

"Ask yourself: If I were not a member of my group, would this news release interest me? If not, tear it up."

The daily meals served by a nutrition project are not news after the first week. But if a regular recipient of the meals is so grateful he or she volunteers to help serve them, that is news, especially if he or she is 70 or 80 years old.

A transportation service for the elderly was news when it started, but not now or next week, unless records show that 150 people used it last week compared with 60 the week before and as a result more buses are being assigned to run more often.

One point of caution: Don't think in terms of "publicity". No news organization is in business to provide an outlet for "publicity" for anyone. They are interested in news. News is anything enough people are interested in—what has happened, what is happening, or what is going to happen.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of news spot news and feature stories. Spot news is perishable. It must be used before a certain event takes place or immediately afterward to have any value. A feature story can be used any time. It highlights the human elements behind the news.

Sources of news exist throughout any organization, no matter how large or small. Nothing your program does should be overlooked as a source of information from which spot news stories or features can be prepared. Here are a few things which may be good sources for news stories:

- Your area plan. When your area plan is announced, write a short news story summarizing its major points, and send the story and a complete copy of your plan to news media. Be prepared to assist them with further background information.
- Monthly or quarterly performance reports. These can often be summarized in a short news release.
- The people on your advisory council or with whom you deal or some of the people receiving services from your program.
- Events. Include here such things as new grants awards, new services, special observations, special activities of any sort.
- Visits by prominent local, State, or Federal officials.
- Statistical information which shows improvement in any phase of your program.
- Human interest material which shows how your program touches the lives of people and helps them.
- Pictures. Don't overlook possible picture opportunities for the press and television. Frequently, a story may not warrant coverage by a reporter in the judgment of his editors. A photo assignment—if you can come up with a good idea—is usually welcome. (See page 24 for additional comments.)

THE SPOT NEWS STORY

When you write a spot news story, try to write the story the way a reporter would write it. The lead, that is the first sentence or two, must contain the "WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY." The lead is designed to give the reader information quickly and in such a manner that he will want to read the rest of the story. It should be kept to thirty words or less, if possible.

After the lead, the details are written, in declining order of importance. This permits the story to be cut from the bottom, if need be, without having to rewrite it to avoid leaving out important facts.

Be brief. Ordinarily use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs. Avoid adjectives. Avoid being cute or literary or arty.

Typical News Release

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009

August 31, 1974
Doakes: OXford 0-0001
Home: OXford 0-0002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Oxford Area Agency on Aging today (Sept. 2) announced establishment of a dial-a-minibus service for the elderly.

The service will be operated by the Oxford Public Transit Authority in Oxford and East Oxford. By dialing OXford 0-1234 during business hours older citizens may arrange to be picked up next day for transportation to clinics, hospitals, doctors, supermarkets, senior centers, and libraries.

The fare is 20¢ and is available to men and women who show Medicare, social security, or membership cards in senior centers.

It is made possible by a $24,000 grant to the Transit Authority from the U.S. Department of Transportation for the purchase of two minibuses and a $48,000 grant from Area Agency under title III of the U. S. Older Americans Act for operating expenses. There are nearly 40,000 people over 60 years of age in the area.

The area agency also supervises a nutrition project for the elderly under title VII of the Older Americans Act with funds allotted through the State Commission on Aging.

Further information on the transportation program and other activities of the Oxford Area Agency on Aging is available at its office, 521 East Main St., East Oxford, telephone OXford 0-0001. John J. Doakes is Director and Miss Ellen Roe, Secretary of the Agency.

--end--

6

exact dates ("May 18," not just "Tuesday"). Always use addresses when necessary.

Never editorialize. Don't write "A wonderful day was had by all." Not only is this hackneyed and trite but it is, after all, just your opinion. Instead, write something like this: "Mrs. Mary Jones, 87, who lives in Parkland, said this was the first trip she had been able to take in over four years. 'It's something I'll remember the rest of my days,' she said."

The sample story on page 6 should give you a good idea of how to prepare a spot news story.

If this sounds too involved, take your time. Practice a little before you submit copy to a newspaper. In the meantime, keep your news going out by means of simple fact sheets, such as the one shown on page 8.

These will let news media know what's going on, and they can call you for additional details if they are interested. But even with a fact sheet, you should do your best to include facts and details that will interest the editor and be of interest to his readers or listeners.

THE FEATURE STORY

Feature stories are written days, even weeks, before they appear because they are not timely. They may be definitely tied to a time element, but they are about something you know is going to happen, or that you can control. Eighty-seven-year-old Mrs. Mary Jones, used earlier as an example for a news story, may also provide material for a feature story. What are her interests, what did she do for four years before discovering the transportation service, is she a widow, did her husband have a great war record, did she travel, does she paint or have an interesting hobby? She might, in other words, provide plenty of material for a "personality" feature.

Other people and events connected with your program can easily provide much material for feature stories. In your date book, keep a record of the more newsworthy older people in your area, and a record of special events such as anniversaries. When you think you have good material for a feature story, talk to the editor of your local paper or to the reporter who usually covers your project. Be sure to get to them two or three weeks in advance of any special date and ask if they are interested, and whether they want you to provide a prepared story or information from which they can write the story themselves.

If the editor assigns someone to do the story, write a memo giving him all the data, introduce him and his photographer to the interviewee, and give efficient but unobtrusive assistance. Do not insist on sitting in unless the person interviewed makes it a condition.

You may want to help the interviewee by telling him in advance the kind of questions he is likely to be asked. If he can be somewhat prepared, he'll feel more comfortable and the interview will go more smoothly. Your notes on the individual should contain a paragraph of general information about your program. If it's used, fine; if not, nothing is lost.

If the editor says he'll use a story you prepare, keep in mind that a feature must be news, too, and that news is something which interests people other than yourself and your close associates. Build your story around facts of general interest. (See foregoing on "What is News?") A little study of feature stories in your local papers will quickly show you what is being used. And just give the facts in plain language; if they are really interesting enough to be news, they'll be dramatic without flowery writing.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Important as they are, big newspapers are not the only printed-word outlet for news of your activities. Get a list of all publications in your area, including suburban newspapers, weeklies, trade papers, employee magazines or house organs; union, fraternal, chamber of commerce, business, and church publications; and shopping news sheets given away by many chain stores. Frequently editors of these publications are only too glad to give your program a brief mention if you give them what they need and want. Find out what these editors will use and their deadlines. You'll be amazed at the extent of their coverage and readership.

The same is true, of course, of small, local radio stations. Make them your friends.

News Release Fact Sheet

Dial-A-Minibus Service
of Oxford Area Agency on Aging
and Oxford Public Transit Authority
521 East Main St.
East Oxford, Your State 90009

August 31, 1974
Doakes: OXford 0-0001
Home: OXford 0-0002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

What: Opening of Senior Minibus Service

WHEN: 10 a.m., Sept. 2

WHERE: Oxford Area Agency on Aging

521 East Main St., East Oxford

WHO: Mayor Peter D. Barnes and Transit Authority Chairman

Joseph X. McCaffery will speak briefly.

ADDITIONAL FACTS:

All persons over 60 are eligible for this service if they show a social security, Medicare, or senior center membership card. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance with the area agency, telephone OXford 0-0001, or James A. Doe, Transit Authority superintendent of the service, OXford 0-1234.

Using two 12-passenger minibuses, the Transit Authority will carry eligible persons to and from their homes to hospitals, clinics, doctors' and dentists' offices, senior centers, supermarkets, and libraries.

Minibus fare will be 20¢ round-trip.

The service is made possible by a $48,000 grant to the Transit Authority by the Area Agency on Aging under title III of the U. S. Older Americans Act for operating expenses and $24,000 from the U. S. Department of Transportation for purchase of the minibuses.

--end--

8

TELEVISION AND RADIO

Radio and TV should play a vital role in your total information picture, and you don't have to be an expert to use them effectively. However, you do need to understand how radio and television stations operate, the options that are open to you, and the most productive ways to request and receive coverage of your agency's activities. These are not hard and fast rules, only practical suggestions. Stations, after all, are run by people, not guidebooks.

To the professional broadcaster, radio and television are distinct and separate media, each with its own technical requirements. For your purposes, however, many of the methodologies suggested for television are applicable to radio. While there are differences between the two media which may dictate the use of other styles or approaches, they are more alike than you might imagine. One similarity lies in the fact that both media can create immediate public impact and offer a variety of opportunities to tell your story. The other is that both radio and television, except for the public broadcasting stations, are commercial media, and to deal with them you must think in commercial terms, accommodating your information program to the needs of broadcasting.

Commercial broadcasters face a peculiar dilemma. Their first requirement is to sell time to commercial sponsors in order to pay the high operating costs and earn a respectable profit. This means that they generally look for products with a high entertainment value which will appeal to a wide and diverse audience. Their second requirement is to be responsive to community interests and needs, including those of minorities and other special populations. (In this case, "community" is defined as the geographical area covered by the broadcast signal, not merely the jurisdiction in which the station is located.) To demonstrate their "community responsiveness," stations are obligated by the Federal Communications Commission to devote a certain amount of time to programs and spot announcements in the public interest—without charge.

These two demands on broadcasters are frequently in conflict, and the problem is further compounded by the fact that the FCC sets no minimum amount of time that a station must donate to public service broadcasting. The only reckoning comes at the time of the station's license renewal when this is carefully scrutinized and weighed.

You can well appreciate the broadcasters' plight, caught as they are between their need to make money and their desire to serve the public interest. Station executives are besieged with demands for that small but unspecified amount of public service time. If you were a broadcaster, how would you decide who gets coverage? You would probably select the organization that comes up with a "saleable" product, one which (1) is of demonstrable community concern and (2) meets both format and technical requirements of the station.

Now it's up to you, the area agency, to create such a product, and this means carefully planning *what* you should say and *how* you ought to say it. Always have a working idea before you approach a station; don't expect to sell a station merely on the basis of your worthiness.

Noncommercial radio and TV stations—those belonging to a public broadcasting system or attached to a university—are a different matter. While they usually do not reach as large an audience as commercial stations, all their time is "public service," so to speak, and they are usually happy to air material relating to local service programs and may even offer to help prepare it, especially if there is some money to pay part of the cost of the production.

A number of States have their own educational TV systems. These are statewide public broadcasting systems and, if they produce a show for you or use your PSAs, you will be getting statewide visibility.

Also don't overlook any stations which may be sponsored by universities or colleges in your area. A university TV or radio station may agree to make a program on some topic you suggest as a class project. In that case you may get a very professional production from an investment of very little of your time and no money.

RADIO OR TELEVISION?

Generally, you would include television in your most important communications efforts

where you want to reach the largest number of people. However, you should also consider TV when you have a story of lesser importance that has great visual impact, or an opportunity to affect attitudes, such as creating community awareness of the problems of the elderly.

Radio's audiences, on the other hand, are fragmented and specialized. Since there are about 7,000 radio stations as opposed to 700 TV stations in the commercial broadcasting field, competition has made it necessary for radio broadcasters to target their programming to particular segments of the population.

Many radio stations are ethnic in orientation and have become the chief medium of communication for black or Spanish speaking Americans. If any exist in your area, they may constitute the best means of reaching some of your elderly poor, many of whom are in minority groups. Other stations specialize in the type of music played. It is doubtful that you will reach many older people on a "top forty" station, but there are almost a thousand radio stations in the country airing country and western music, and they have a large and loyal following at all age levels. Increasingly, FM radio has become the medium for all-music format, while AM is more talk oriented, tends to offer more variety in programming, and is more likely to be heard by older people who might not be able to afford the more expensive AM/FM models. You should, however, examine the particular mix of media in your area.

ASSESS THE STATION'S PROGRAMMING

Before you make an initial approach to a station, familiarize yourself with its locally produced shows. They are one of the best indications of what type of issues the station considers of interest and importance to the community. Note the format and frequency of public service announcements on behalf of local organizations, the amount of time devoted to area news in the local newscasts, and the type of guest who usually appears on talk shows. On the basis of this assessment, you can see where you might best fit into existing station programming. Remember, the more closely your information efforts conform to established formats, the more likely they are to be used.

Don't make the mistake of thinking exclusively in terms of news coverage; there are many opportunities for getting your message across via local talk shows or newsmaker interviews. If possible, assign someone the task of compiling a local program list for each station (with the assistance of *TV Guide* and the newspaper logs), indicating the type of program, length, time and day of broadcast, name of host or moderator, and categories of guests. Viewing sample programs is a desirable follow-up. Then, when you approach a station, indicate your familarity with specific programs, so the station manager realizes you've given some thought to contacting his station instead of just making the rounds.

FIND OUT WHO'S WHO

One last step before contacting the station is to find out the names and functions of the top station personnel, and this can easily be done by a phone call to the switchboard. These are the people and positions you will need to know: the station manager or general manager (terminology differs from station to station). He is the boss. Under him come the program director (or program manager) and the news director. In some stations, the local public affairs shows are the responsibility of the program director, and in others, the news director. A few major stations in larger cities have a separate public affairs program director who manages this category. So, when you call the station, find out the areas of responsibility. You will also need to know the name of the person who processes and schedules public service announcements.

APPROACHING THE STATION

If yours is a relatively new area agency, or if this is your first approach to a station, go directly to the top—the station manager. It is his prerogative to refer you to someone under him, but at least the request to see you will come from the boss.

It is best to write a letter to the station manager requesting an appointment at his convenience. Your letter should cover three specific areas:

1. State your mission and goals, list some of the important organizations with which you work, and the number of people your area agency seeks to help. Do this very briefly.

When you meet with the station manager you may supplement this information with fact sheets or press releases.

2. Indicate in specific terms what you are asking of the station—a series of public service announcements, a guest appearance on a certain show, news coverage of a specific event, or a combination of them all. If existing local programming isn't suited to your needs, and if you can make a sufficiently good case, you might request a program of your own, either a series or a one-shot special. In any case, whatever your request, submit workable ideas. Don't waste the station manager's time with vague generalities.

3. In both the letter and the interview, be careful not to put the station on the defensive. Put your case positively, indicating why you think your message is important and of widespread interest. Fortunately, there is an increasing awareness on the part of the media that older people constitute a significant segment of their viewing audience, so you may not have to blaze a trail in this area.

If the station is interested in proceding with your ideas, see to it that only one person is assigned the responsibility of working with the station for your area agency. Approaches by several people from the same organization are confusing and counterproductive. Be prepared to accept suggestions, and remember to write a follow-up letter of thanks to the station manager.

If you have followed these suggestions and still get turned down by the station, don't badger them about it. If you have made a good presentation it will be remembered. Leave the door open for future contacts, and try again in a few months.

TELEVISION PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Public service announcements (PSAs) are short (10 to 60 seconds), precisely timed messages that are aired without charge during station breaks. In prime viewing hours, most of the time will be sold commercially. In the remaining hours, you will be competing against large national organizations as well as every other worthy community group for available public service time. Thus, although you might prefer one-minute spots, the station prefers smaller increments because they can accommodate a larger number of organizations.

Don't be discouraged by this. It is amazing how much you can get across in shorter periods of time, particularly when visuals are used effectively to amplify the spoken word. The shorter TV spots run 10, 20, or 30 seconds in length, but in major markets 20-second announcements are less commonly used.

Because of time limitations, the PSA is best used when you want to get across one single message. It is effective when urging a specific group of people to some action within a clearly defined area. Note, for example, how many national spots deal with fund raising. It is well to think of the PSA in terms of *action verbs*. For example: Volunteer, for transportation services; Utilize, for available social services; Attend, for nutrition centers; Call, for information and referral services; Hire, for older workers; etc.

Note that each of these actions implies a specific target audience. While many of your messages will be aimed at older people, you may want to reach other segments of the community at other times, and occasionally the general public. It is therefore very important that your target audience is clearly identified at the start of your message.

HOW TO WRITE A PSA

When you write a public service spot of whatever length, there are certain things to keep in mind in addition to naming your target audience. You want to be forceful and specific, so don't waste time and words on vague generalities. The most important information, such as telephone numbers or addresses, should be repeated verbally and backed up visually. It may be helpful to pretend that you are talking directly to one individual and frame your message so that the person will clearly understand what you want him to do and the positive effects that will result.

You need not be intimidated by the slick, professional, and expensively filmed spots distributed by national organizations. Many stations actually prefer to feature local organizations in their public service time. A simple and effective public service spot can be

done with relative ease. Basically, all that is needed is timed copy to be read by an announcer, with one 35mm color slide to accompany each 10 seconds of air time.

Normally, a 10-second announcement contains 15 to 20 words, a 20-second spot has 35 to 40 words, a 30-second spot, 55 to 65 words, and a 60-second spot, approximately 120 to 125 words. When counting your words, watch out for numbers, which may look like one short word when written out, but are actually spoken as several words ("120" equals "one hundred and twenty"). Don't ever read a spot silently when timing it; say it out loud in your regular speaking voice. If you don't, you are likely to run over.

Slides are 35mm color transparencies which can be professionally done at minimal cost. Make sure that they are horizontal, not vertical, and that the graphics and pictures are concentrated in the middle since there is a peripheral loss when projected on TV. Slides should be mounted between glass—because ardboard gets stuck in the slide chain—and should measure 2" x 2". Most professional photographers can mount your slides, as well as advise you on the limits of the usable area within a slide. Many TV stations will also do this, but allow them extra time.

There is a specific format for a TV public service spot which must be followed. At the top, you list the name of the contact, your organization's name, address, and phone number. You also put down the actual dates of the time period during which you want the PSA to be aired. Depending on the purpose of the spot, this could be anywhere from a few days to a month. Below that, write a headline for the spot so that its content can be identified immediately. The length of the spot and the number of words are listed at the left margin below the headline. The most vital part of the PSA format is that the copy is written in a right-hand column, headed "AUDIO," and the accompanying visuals placed at the corresponding point in the left column, headed "VIDEO." In the case of slides, the left-hand column would say SLIDE No. ____, leaving room for the station to write its own identification number. Immediately under this, in parentheses, describe the picture, if a photograph, or the copy, if the slide contains written material. This is done so that the slides won't get out of sequence, despite the identification numbers. (See sample PSA on page 13.)

Make sure that each slide is listed directly to the left of its designated paragraph of copy. While the general rule of thumb is one slide for each 10 seconds of timed copy, be flexible about this, particularly in the case of a slide to be read by the viewer. Also if you show a phone number or address at the start of a longer announcement, and want to repeat it at the end, you must provide two separate slides, even if they are duplicates.

If you want to attempt a more complicated production, you should determine from the station its preferences, and the degree to which the station may be willing to assist you. Many stations will discuss the development of necessary visual support materials, whether color films, art work, cartoons, or studio placards, as well as slides. Some stations even set aside a segment of their studio time to participate in the production of public service announcements for local groups. You might be able to use a well-known civic leader or other public figure in a taped spot. Keep in mind the possibility that among the older people in your area there may be persons who have retired from broadcasting or advertising who would be happy to assist you in your efforts. Don't feel, however, that you must employ all sorts of gimmicks to produce an effective public service announcement. A simple, straight forward approach is frequently the best, particularly if you do not have access to professional assistance.

For each specific message you want to get across by a public service announcement, it is a good idea to offer a variety of lengths because the station may be able to air your 10-second spot several times, but not find time for your 60-second spot. Study network commercials for good hints on how to condense longer material. You must include a separate set of slides for each announcement, even though many of them are duplicates. Keep your headline and basic information constant, whatever the length, so that the station will realize that you are dealing with the same subject. If you have a public service announcement intended for use over a long period of time, vary your copy. Viewers have a way of tuning out words they have heard

Television Public Service Announcement

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 East Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
OXford 0-0001

SENIOR MINIBUS SERVICE

For use: Sunday, September 1, through Sunday, September 15, 1974

SENIOR DIAL-A-MINIBUS SERVICE

Time: 30 seconds
Words: 65

VIDEO	AUDIO
Slide #_____	ANNCR: If you're over 60, you can
(Elderly woman on telephone)	Dial-a-Minibus in the Oxford and East
	Oxford area. Phone the day before to
Slide #_____	arrange your trip from home to medical
(Same woman getting off bus with groceries)	appointments, shopping, senior centers,
	or libraries at twenty cents round trip.
Slide #_____	You're eligible with social security,
(Dial-a-Minibus: OX 0-1234)	Medicare, or senior center cards.
	Dial-a-Minibus at OXford 0-1234.
	That's OXford 0-1234.

repeated too many times in exactly the same way. Make sure the station understands that these are variations on a theme, and group the spots together by length when you send them to the station.

NOTE: From time to time, professionally produced public service announcements may be sent directly to your local television stations under the auspices of AoA. These will deal with national thrusts, such as Older Americans Month. Even though they are distributed nationally, there is usually some provision at the end for local identification, such as your State or area agency on aging. You will receive notification of their having been distributed, and it is a good idea to follow up with the stations, indicating their local tie-in. Stations are more likely to use nationally distributed PSAs if they know that there is a strong community affiliation.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

An increasing number of television stations set aside a regularly scheduled time period each day for an assortment of notices from various organizations, dealing with events of community interest. This can be an excellent opportunity for you to present short announcements of meetings, available services, etc. The great advantage is that the messages are not timed, and require no visuals. Limit your announcements to a few sentences, and include your phone number if indicated. You should also supplement your copy with a press release, so that the station has available the additional information required by viewers who call there.

RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Radio copy is slightly faster than television. The rule of thumb is 25 words per 10-second increment. Thus, a 10-second PSA contains roughly 25 words, a 20-second spot has 50, a 30-second PSA, 75, and a 60-second spot contains about 150 words. In many areas of the country, the 15-second spot is gaining favor. It should contain approximately 37 words. Obviously, radio copy is written for the ear exclusively, so let that be your guide. Avoid unnecessary details, because the listeners can't grasp too much in a short period of time. In shorter spots, try to emphasize the most important point. In longer spots, emphasize and then re-emphasize. You don't have visuals to support your words, so the words alone must tell your story.

Radio public service spots are apt to be broadcast at different hours than television spots, because "prime time" for radio is during the morning and evening rush hours, rather than the 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. period on TV. Your radio spots are more likely to be broadcast during the middle of the day or in the later evening hours. That is not necessarily bad where your older listeners are concerned, because their listening habits may be somewhat different from those of the work force.

In typing a radio PSA, again indicate the time period during which you want the spot to be aired. Usually, two weeks is the longest, with the exception of Older Americans Month. After that, stations feel that it is someone else's turn. Public service announcements should be headlined, so the subject can be noted at a glance. This is particularly important where more than one spot has been submitted on the same topic. The time of the spot and the number of words should also be listed for the convenience of the announcer. Again, all spots should be read out loud against a stop watch, because it's the time that matters, not the number of words. (For examples of radio PSAs, see pages 15-16.)

TELEVISION NEWS

The competition for news coverage on television is very keen. It may be possible to add pages to a newspaper if there is sufficient advertising, but broadcasters cannot add minutes to their newscasts. Realistically, the chances for all but your most important stories being reported as "hard news" are slim, so avoid flooding the station with routine press releases. They won't be used, and the important ones will end up in the wastebasket too.

You have a better chance for coverage in the "news feature" category where human interest stories with strong visual appeal are used to lighten and personalize newscasts or create audience awareness of community problems. It takes imagination to come up with a good news feature story, but try to

Radio Public Service Announcement

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
Oxford 0-0001

FOR USE:
SEPTEMBER 2, 1974 TO
SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

SENIOR DIAL-A-MINIBUS SERVICE

Time: 10"

Words: 27 words

If you're over 60, find out about half price transportation. Dial-a-Minibus. Call OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234.

Radio Public Service Announcement

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
OXford 0-0009

FOR USE:
SEPTEMBER 2, 1974, TO
SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

SENIOR DIAL-A-MINIBUS SERVICE

Time: 10"

Words: 25 words

Oxford area senior citizens: Dial-a-minibus today at OXford 0-0009 and arrange door-to-door services for needed trips tomorrow.

Radio Public Service Announcement

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
OXford 0-0009

FOR USE:
SEPTEMBER 2, 1974, TO
SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

SENIOR DIAL-A-MINIBUS SERVICE

Time: 20"

Words: 49 words

Oxford area residents: If you're 60 or older, you may qualify for door-to-door transportation to your doctor's office, supermarket, or senior center. It costs only 20 cents round trip. Dial-a-minibus by calling OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234.

Radio Public Service Announcement

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
OXford 0-0001

FOR USE:
SEPTEMBER 2, 1974, TO
SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

SENIOR DIAL-A-MINIBUS SERVICE

Time: 30"

Words: 75 words

Oxford area residents over 60: If you have transportation problems, these numbers could help. Call OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234 to Dial-a-Minibus and reserve low-cost, door-to-door transportation to medical appointments or shopping. You're eligible if you have social security, Medicare, or senior center cards. Remember, Dial-a-Minibus at OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234.

think in terms of people, not programs. For example, look for an interesting older person—someone with an offbeat view of life or an unusual talent or hobby—and tell how your programs have affected his life. Also worth exploring is the unusual event with good visual potential, such as a senior citizens fair, or the opening of a new nutrition center, where again your programs can be shown in terms of their impact on real people. An advantage of the news feature story is that it can usually be held and aired when time is available.

When you have an item that you consider newsworthy in the context of the local news operation, try to get the information to the news director as early as you can—a week in advance, if possible. Never submit a news release on an event that has already taken place. Submit a possible feature to the news director as a story suggestion, indicating the visual or human interest appeal.

WRITING A NEWS RELEASE FOR TELEVISION

If you have a story you think qualifies as hard news, adapt your print news release to the requirements of television. While some TV news operations have the time and personnel available to do this, it has a better chance of being used if you submit copy that already takes the medium into consideration. It is always wise to include a fact sheet with your release. The station may see other possibilities in your story or may wish to rewrite it to conform more closely with its own style requirements.

A story written for TV news must supply the same essential facts supplied by a press release, but you won't have time for the details normally included in the latter part of a press release. Also remember that what you are writing is designed to be heard, not seen. Such copy is more informal than print copy, uses more contractions, and generally follows the lines of oral conversation. It is particularly important to have a good lead that catches the ear. There should be no more than one idea per sentence and the sentences should not be long. The ear is the judge. If you are in doubt, read it out loud and see how it sounds.

A TV news release may follow the normal print format, as far as the crediting and release information at the top are concerned. However, the National Association of Broadcasters suggests that all crediting information be listed in the left-hand column, and the release date written at the right. Be specific about the release date. Say "For use on Monday, September 2" rather than "For immediate release." This allows you to use such words as "today" or "tomorrow" in your copy if the event is imminent. If there is a longer time lapse, it is best to use specific dates. Most stations prefer copy to be triple-spaced, rather than double-spaced, and with wider margins than press releases. Start your copy a third of the way down the page, and don't split a paragraph over to a successive page. Proper names should be phoneticized in parentheses, following the regular spelling, if they are difficult to pronounce. Use soft, standard-size paper that doesn't rattle for air-ready copy, and bear in mind that copies must be as legible as the originals. A good Xerox copy is generally better than a carbon. Check with the news directors to see how many copies the station requires. (See sample TV or radio news releases on pp. 18 and 19.)

Since requirements vary from station to station, it's also a good idea to check with the news director about their policy on visuals. Some stations will use color photographs, but most prefer 35mm color slides. Try to figure out some unusual visual angle. The only exception to this search for the unusual is in the case of providing all local stations with a 35mm color head and shoulders shot of the area agency director to keep on file.

Finally, if you don't have sufficient time to write a special TV release, by all means send a regular press release to avoid failing to notify the station of an important event.

RADIO NEWS

A story written for television news is perfectly acceptable copy for radio. If you take the time and trouble to rewrite a press release for TV, send it to all the local radio stations too. Be aware, however, that radio stations rarely use copy that isn't air-ready, so don't expect press releases to be used as they are. The reason for this is that many radio stations either don't have news departments,

News Release for Radio or Television

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009

FOR RELEASE:
Saturday, August 31, 1974

The Oxford Area Agency on Aging today announced a new service called "Dial-a-Minibus." It will provide convenient and inexpensive transportation for many of the area's 40 thousand senior citizens.

Starting Monday, older residents of the Oxford and East Oxford area can phone OXford 0-0001 or OXford 1-1234 to arrange for door-to-door transportation to medical appointments, supermarkets, senior centers, and libraries.

The fare will be 20 cents for a round trip.

To take advantage of the new minibus service, area residents over 60 must phone 24 hours in advance, and must hold Medicare, social security, or senior center membership cards.

The project was made possible by a 48 thousand dollar grant to the Public Transit Authority for operating expenses from the Oxford Area Agency on Aging and a 24 thousand dollar grant for two minibuses from the U. S. Department of Transportation.

Remember, to Dial-a-Minibus, the numbers to call are OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234.

News Release for Radio or Television

Oxford Area Agency on Aging
John J. Doakes, Director
521 Main Street
East Oxford, Your State 90009
OXford 0-0001

FOR RELEASE:
SUNDAY, September 1, 1974

Starting tomorrow, area senior citizens can dial-a-minibus and get door-to-door transportation to medical appointments, shopping, and senior centers.

The fare will be 20 cents for a round trip.

To take advantage of this new transportation service, area residents over 60 must phone 24 hours in advance, and must hold Medicare, social security, or senior center cards.

To dial-a-minibus, the numbers to call are OXford 0-0001 or OXford 0-1234.

The project was made possible by a 48 thousand dollar grant to the Public Transit Authority for operating expenses from the Oxford Area Agency on Aging and a 24 thousand dollar grant for two minibuses from the U. S. Department of Transportation.

An estimated 40 thousand older people in the Oxford and East Oxford area are eligible for this service.

or use the facilities of affiliated television stations. Most small radio stations follow the "rip and read" method of news coverage, tearing off the latest wire service reports for their news broadcasts. These stations simply don't have the personnel to edit a regular press release for radio use. So, to recapitulate, send only releases especially written for television, including the fact sheets, to small radio stations. If time absolutely precludes special editing of a vital story, send your regular press release, but don't be surprised if it can't be used.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMMING

One of the best ways of getting your story across to both the general public and the elderly is to take advantage of existing public or community affairs programs in your area. There are no costs, since you have a ready-made production in terms of staff, facilities, and an established audience. All that is necessary is that you match up your ideas suitably with the available programs.

One genre of community affairs program is the "Newsmaker Interview." This can be either a one-to-one interview or a local "Meet the Press" format, in which government officials, representatives of organizations, or other community leaders are questioned by one or more newsmen to elicit their thoughts on topics of local concern.

Another type of community affairs program is the panel show, usually issue-oriented to local problems and needs, using panelists with various views on the subject.

Both of these formats can be excellent platforms for talking about your overall mission as an area agency. There is also considerable status and recognition to be gained by appearing on these programs because they are topical, serious, and deal with real community problems and issues.

One word of caution: although these programs are considered prestigious, they are almost by definition dull television viewing. For that reason, the newsmen or moderators involved may sometimes try to beef up the show by injecting as much controversy as possible. Always view a show before considering an appearance. If you still feel it's good exposure, go ahead, but take care not to end up with your foot in your mouth.

In quite a different vein of programming is the "entertainment talk show," usually in a variety of magazine format, and hosted by a "personality." If you make a guest appearance on this type of program, you may find yourself in some strange company (your interview may follow a demonstration of belly dancing), and you won't have as much time as on a news-oriented discussion show. On the other hand, such programs are widely and regularly viewed, and you may have an opportunity of reaching some people you wouldn't ordinarily have access to—including some of your area's older population.

In this type of format, where variety and fast pacing are the keys, it is best to emphasize one aspect of your agency's activities, such as information and referral, transportation services, or your nutrition program. You should also adapt yourself to the tone of the program. This is an opportunity to respond in a much more personal and informal basis than if you were answering the questions of a newsman.

For an initial appearance on a program, or if you plan to talk about the entire scope of your agency, your director is the logical spokesman. Similarly, if yours is a newly established area agency, the director should appear for purposes of exposure and recognition.

Producers, however, do not want the same guests making frequent repeat appearances, so it is wise to develop a list of "surrogate panelists." There are so many aspects of your agency's activities that lend themselves to the talk show format that you will have numerous subjects to suggest. Therefore, look for people who are interesting and important in their own right, who are able to discuss their own activities and explain how they fit into your agency plans.

For example, if you are launching a new transportation service for the elderly in your area, you might consider an official from the local transit authority to describe the program. Similarly, if you have made a grant to a local social service agency to expand their programs to include the elderly, a spokesman from that organization might be the guest. Do make sure however, that, when a surrogate

panelist discusses programs you sponsor, appropriate credit is given to your area agency. This is the back door approach to publicizing your activities, but it is the *information* that is important, not the glamor conferred upon the person who is making the television appearance.

In shows where more than one guest can be interviewed on the same subject, you might want to consider the human interest value of someone who either works in a program for the elderly or is a recipient of a service. In the former case, make sure that the worker has a sympathetic but non-condescending view of older people. In the case of a service recipient, try to select an older person with an unusual hobby or interesting past achievements and let that be discussed along with the service. In other words, think "image" and the ways in which you can raise public consciousness about the value and dignity of older people. In this connection, an articulate older person who is a volunteer in one of your programs would make an excellent guest. When you use your imagination, you will find the possibilities are almost limitless for subjects and panelists that can help in your public information program without "overexposing" the director.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN APPEARANCE

As indicated above, you should first familiarize yourself with the specific programs produced by the station, noting formats, moderators and hosts, and whether the program is news or entertainment oriented. That way, you should have a fairly good idea of the type of subject and panelists suited to a particular program. The next step is to contact the station and interest them in your idea. If you have never worked with the station before, follow the steps suggested under the section "Making Your First Approach to a Station". If you have already established an ongoing relationship, contact the individual in charge of the show. (This could be either the Program Director or the News Director, so check with the switchboard.) The only exception is the *daily* program, in which case you may contact the producer directly. Don't phone: Your request will only receive careful consideration if you put it into writing, indicating the subject you wish to discuss, and the credentials of the people you are proposing as guests. You should also enclose a fact sheet describing the functions of your agency, particularly if it's relatively new. That way, if your specific program idea doesn't ring any bells, the station can come back with a counter-proposal.

It is particularly important to convey to the station that there is a sizable aging constituency in the area it serves, since this may well allow you to tie in with planned news and public affairs programs discussing aging-related issues. Maybe a station won't devote an entire show to the specific problems of the elderly, but it will be willing to include a spokesman for older people in discussions of issues that affect them, such as housing transportation, or inflation.

Once a show has been agreed upon, you will be expected to provide background information on the issues to be covered, plus biographical data on the person(s) to be interviewed. (Be selective in what you send; don't deluge the interviewer with unnecessary materials.) On most occasions, it is helpful to the producer and interviewer if you will also submit a proposed list of questions well in advance. The only time this might not be appreciated is if the interview is to be conducted by one or more professional newsmen who prefer to prepare their own questions. Ask, if you are in doubt. In any case, emphasize the point that your questions are only *suggestions.*

The way an interview or discussion begins is of vital importance. You should catch your audience's interest immediately or they will switch channels. Start off with an intentionally provocative question. Resist the temptation to open the interview with "What is Title III?" or the audience won't be around to hear your answer.

Bear in mind that a good interview (a) gives information, (b) arouses interest in an issue, and (c) clarifies points of view if a subject is controversial. Using these criteria, prepare a line of questioning, making sure that one point will lead naturally into another, and and that the subject will be covered in the time allotted. Prepare at least ten questions per 15 minutes of air time, and put the most important areas first, to make sure that they will be used.

Think in terms of visual support where appropriate. On some programs, particularly straight news and public affairs interviews, this is not possible. However, in many other cases, the stations welcome ideas to get away from the "talking heads" format by using studio demonstrations, film clips, photographs, slides, and charts or graphs. (The latter should be used very judiciously, as a poorly prepared chart or graph can be worse than no visual at all.)

The content of the program should dictate the type of visual aid employed. If, for example, you're talking about an information and referral service, a slide with a telephone number would be logical. But try to be more than logical; be imaginative. If you're talking about the nutrition program, a typical meal might be displayed in the studio. Also, don't ignore the visual value of crafts, hobbies, collections, and memorabilia when older people are guests. Naturally, the use of any visual aid must be pre-arranged with the station. Props are generally submitted a day or two before the program to give the director an opportunity to incorporate them into the set. Slides, photos, and film clips should also be submitted early for processing: ask the producer how far in advance.

TIPS ON GUEST APPEARANCES ON TV

Men should wear medium tone suits, conservative neck-ties, and dark, over-the-calf socks. Avoid loudly patterned suits, such as wild plaids, or checks. Also avoid white shirts as they produce a harsh glare on most color cameras. Any pastel or medium-tone colored shirt is fine.

Women should wear business clothes in solid colors or quiet prints. Avoid extremely dark or light colors, but medium and bright colors are good. A well-tailored pants suit is perfectly acceptable, but if you would rather wear a dress, make sure it has a full enough skirt so you won't have to worry about how much of your legs are showing on camera. Apply your usual makeup, but consider using a brighter lipstick and more powder than you might normally wear. Don't wear clanky jewelry.

It's a good idea to bring to the studio an extra set of questions and fact sheets—they have a strange way of getting lost at the last minute. Don't be surprised or upset if there is little or no time to discuss your appearance with the interviewer before the show. If you do have a few minutes, it will probably be an informal chat to serve as a warm-up. This is not the time to suggest new topics you want discussed. You should use whatever free time you have before hand to review in your own mind your most important points so that you can lead the discussion around to them and weave them in, should the interviewer deviate widely from your suggested line of questioning.

During the program:

1. Unless you are specifically directed to do otherwise, never look at the cameras or monitors during the program. When you talk, look directly at the person to whom you are speaking. Use gestures if they are natural to you. When someone else is talking, always look at and listen to them—as you would in a normal conversation—because you can never tell when the camera will be on you for a "reaction shot."

2. Don't lecture, ramble, or make speeches. Answer clearly and concisely without being terse. Allow the moderator to make comments and respond to your statements. If, on the other hand, the interviewer cuts you off with a new question before you have made your point, you can always complete your answer by saying, "Before I answer that, I'd like to get back to what I was saying before." Use as many specific examples as possible throughout your appearance. They will spark and personalize your discussion. To paraphrase the old chestnut, one case history is worth a thousand generalities.

3. Use every television and radio appearance as an opportunity to counteract aging stereotypes and foster new attitudes about the elderly. You can build audience concern for older people without sacrificing their dignity. Try to avoid a we *vs.* they dichotomy in discussing problems of the elderly. Viewers should feel that everything you say has relevance to them, whatever their ages. You can do this by the implication that, if they are not old now, they will be and these may be their problems some day if they are not solved now.

4. Avoid professional jargon like the plague and immediately explain in lay terms if you slip and use a technical phrase. To speak of

the elderly as "consumers of social services" may have a precise meaning to you, but it is hardly the way to create interest and concern in an audience of average people.

5. Sometimes programs are pre-taped for airing at a later date, so avoid references to the time of day you are taping. It sounds silly to hear a guest say, "I'm happy to be here this morning", on an afternoon show. Similarly, try not to date the program by using such phrases as "yesterday" or "last week" in relation to a known event. You can side-step this problem by using the specific day or date on which the event occurred.

6. Whether a program is taped or "live," slips can and do happen. Don't get flustered if you say something wrong or lose a word or forget a name. Just correct yourself or start fresh. Viewers do make allowances for *ad lib* discussions. It is particularly important for you to remain relaxed in such circumstances, because flubs are almost never edited out of taped shows and the damage has already been done if you're on the air live. Another instance where a cool and level head is indicated is on those few programs that have telephone call-in capability or a studio audience invited to question the guest. You may have to field some irrelevant questions, as though it were your fault that Aunt Tillie did not get her Social Security check on time last month.

7. Don't spring any surprises during the program. If you want to give a phone number to viewers or offer them a pamphlet, make sure that this has been prearranged with the staff so that you will receive appropriate production support such as a slide for a phone number or address, for instance, or a copy of the pamphlet mounted for a close-up. Don't wave a brochure in front of a camera without prior warning and expect it to be seen by the viewers.

NEWS CONFERENCES

You may be called upon to set up a news conference to announce some special event—such as a series of open hearings on your proposed area plan, release of your area plan, or establishment of some new service.

Decide whether you want a strictly formal or informal approach. You may find that for most area agencies, inviting local reporters from press, radio, television, and magazines to an informal session in a comfortable setting would be more advisable than a staged presentation.

Guidelines include:

- Invite all media in your area. Don't play favorites.
- Try to have at least some of your material prepared in advance—a statement, a news release, background information, etc. The more complicated the topic, the more specific detail you should have in black and white for reporters to refer to.
- Be sure there's room for everyone you expect to attend but, just as important, if you expect only 5 reporters, do not hold your session in an auditorium seating 500.
- Have a limited number of key staff personnel available to answer questions.
- Know where the nearest telephones and typewriters are and assist reporters who need these facilities. It's a good idea to have a supply of paper on hand as well.
- Be prepared to handle photographers. They usually do much of their work at the beginning of a news conference and then get "color" shots when the conference is underway.
- Be prepared to assist reporters in getting answers to questions asked but unanswered during the news conference.
- Introduce key personnel participating in the news conference at the beginning of the session.
- If you expect representation from radio and TV stations, ask them if they have any special needs.
- Call it a news conference, not a press conference, to avoid ruffling the features of radio and television personnel.

HOLDING PUBLIC HEARINGS ON ANNUAL PLANS ON AGING

The public hearings required annually prior to submission of both State and area agency plans for the forthcoming year afford an excellent opportunity to enlist community interest through the use of the media.

While some States have definite laws or regulations governing the conduct of public

hearings, the public hearings required for annual plans on aging are not viewed as of the same nature as those covered by such State requirements. Public hearings on annual plans are considered a citizen, and especially a consumer, participation process by AoA and are not intended to be subject to stringent regulations.

In any case, to ensure the greatest participation, public notice should be given of the date, time, and place of each hearing at least 2 weeks before it is scheduled. This may take the form of newspaper, radio, or television announcements and it is best to see that the notice is repeated a number of times and in several of the media. Written notices should also be posted in public places such as bulletin boards at senior centers, community centers, or churches, and sent to local magazines and newsletters, especially newsletters of senior citizens organizations. In areas where languages other than English are spoken, notices should be prepared in those languages.

Notices should include information on the method of registering to express views at the hearing and the amount of time allowed for such expressions. They should also encourage the submission of written statements for the record, especially by those who will not be able to attend.

You will want to indicate where the annual plan is available for study. If you have enough copies of the plan, send one to each newspaper, along with a short one- or two-page summary. Annual plans, with summaries, might also be placed in public libraries and senior citizens centers. Summaries can be distributed widely—to major senior citizens organizations, representatives of health and welfare organizations, local government officials and political leaders, and churches.

You may decide to send special invitations to attend the hearing to many of these as well as to newspaper editors. And you will want to ask media personnel to cover it.

Many of the statements included in the section on News Conferences (page 23) will apply to preparations for the hearing.

The ground rules for conducting the hearing are based on simple parliamentary procedure. Provision should be made for individuals to express their views, and it is a good idea to ask participants to register as they arrive by writing their names, organizations, and addresses on a sheet of paper. This may prove a handy reference later.

The person who conducts the meeting need not be the chairman of the advisory council or the director of the area agency, but he or she should be someone who knows how to control a group.

Some sort of record should be kept during the hearing of the views expressed. Verbatim transcripts are desirable but very expensive. A good recorder should be able to get the highlights of what is said, and the correct names and affiliations of the speakers. The registration sheets, if they are complete, will be useful for checking the recorder's notes.

Members of the Advisory Council and staff from the area agency should always be available to answer questions on the plan and on the operations of the area agency. Be prepared for questions or comments from persons who really are not interested in the annual plan and who only want to express their own personal frustrations. They should be allowed to make their statements within the time limits already set for testimony from individuals.

If it is likely that individuals will attend who speak languages other than English, you should arrange for interpreters to be present.

After the hearing is over, you should prepare a summary of it for the record and for circulation to the media and any local organizations or agencies interested. It is important to include the names and addresses of active participants, but be sure these are accurate.

Finally, keep the names and addresses you used for pre-hearing mailings and those of the individuals registering for the hearing for use when you hold your next hearing.

PICTURES

Obviously, TV picture presentation requires careful advance planning with and by the station, and you won't be entering that field without much expert guidance from your friends in the station.

Providing pictures for newspapers and other publications also requires advance planning. Most of yours will be feature, rather than spot

news pictures. (If the governor or the mayor, for example, speaks at one of your affairs, it probably will be covered as spot news by both reporters and photographers, without any move on your part except to give all possible help.)

The rule that news must be something of interest to people outside of your own close circle applies with even greater force to pictures. And pictures should be planned to tell a story, not just show a photogenic person smiling at the camera or a gang of people huddled together.

If the local employment service has placed a record-breaking number of older people in new jobs, that's a news story, of course. Think up a way to dramatize it with a picture. Is one of those placed a good looking man of 82, or a lady who "retired" after 30 years as an R.N. who has now gone back to hospital work as a volunteer? If so, you may have a news picture. But get a picture which shows some *action*.

Perhaps the nurse has an ankle-length uniform she wore years ago as a probationer and is willing to have her picture taken in it alongside a 1968 graduate nurse in modern uniform. This takes advance planning and effort but is worth it. If you can set it up, chances are photo editors will use it if you advise them well in advance.

If you're not taking the picture yourself, be sure it's clear, sharp, and NOT obviously posed.

For press use, photographs should be blown up (enlarged to 8 x 10 inch glossies). Bear this in mind if you're using a camera making smaller negatives. Enlargement magnifies defects such as lack of sharpness.

Never clip or staple photographs or write hard enough on the back for the writing to show through on the front. Always carry or mail them in an envelope with a stiff pasteboard backing. Caption information must be accurate and complete, but as concise and brief as possible. It should be typewritten on a separate piece of paper. Leave a wide margin at the top, paste the top to the back of the picture and fold the remainder over the front of the picture. Then, when an editor uncovers the picture, he knows instantly what it's all about from the firmly affixed caption.

In captions for pictures of people, be sure to list, with pain-staking accuracy, their full names, middle initials, and titles if any, and be certain you have the precise left-to-right order for each one.

Time and place of taking the picture, except in spot news shots, is not absolutely essential, but it is better to list such information anyway. An editor can easily delete information he considers superfluous, but he hasn't time to chase you by telephone for essential data you have omitted.

For example, if the picture of your young and old nurses was taken February 14 in front of St. Mary's Hospital, where the older nurse joined the younger on duty February 15, both the date and the site are essential parts of the caption.

And remember to get permission from people you photograph, if you are going to use their pictures in your public information program.

NOW—IT'S UP TO YOU

From here on, it's up to you. This pamphlet will help you with the techniques of a public information program, but you must build the relationships which will assure success with news media in your community.

Remember that news personnel are no different from other people. They have a job to do and most of them want to do it well. Help them to do their jobs, don't hinder them, and you will make them your friends.

But most important, you will be expected to do a consistent job, not a hit-or-miss one. If newsmen learn that you can be counted on, that material obtained from you is consistently accurate, that you understand the difference between news and propaganda, and that you are invariably candid and responsive, you will always find a ready welcome in any newspaper, radio, or television office.

One final reminder. If you should need, or want, help with any public information program, or with special public information problems, your State agency on aging, the Administration on Aging, and the Assistant Regional Director for Public Affairs in your HEW Regional Office of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare stand ready to help. Don't hesitate to ask.